



Fact Sheet

Canine Companions for Independence®

CCI Facts

1,401 active graduate teams nationwide

206 teams graduated year-to-date 2008

- North Central Region 41
- Northeast Region 39
- Northwest Region 50
- Southeast Region 35
- Southwest Region 41

200 teams graduated in 2007

3,069 teams graduated from founding to date

914 volunteer puppy raisers

127 volunteer breeder caretakers

3000+ active volunteers nationwide

35 volunteer chapters

First Canine Companion team placed in 1978

Several hundred CCI release dogs are currently functioning in such human services roles as bomb searching, border patrol, customs, therapy and guide dogs.

Imagine not being able to do basic tasks like picking up a set of keys, opening a door, pulling down a window shade, carrying a bag of groceries. Imagine being unable to do those things without constant help from family, friends and paid caregivers. Now imagine overcoming these physical barriers and gaining independence with a very special four-legged Canine Companion.

Canine Companions for Independence (CCI) does just that; provides highly trained assistance dogs to children and adults with disabilities. Established in 1975 in Santa Rosa, CA, CCI is the largest non-profit provider of assistance dogs, and is recognized worldwide for the excellence of its dogs, and quality and longevity of the matches it makes between dogs and people. The result is a life full of increased independence and loving companionship.

CCI places four types of assistance dogs: Service Dogs for adults with physical disabilities; Skilled Companions for children and adults with emotional, developmental or physical disabilities who need the help of a training assistant or guardian; Hearing Dogs for individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, and Facility Dogs for professionals to help promote healing and facilitate therapy for patients, students or residents in their care. Dogs serve a wide range of disabilities, including those affected by multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, spinal cord injury, stroke, hearing loss, and developmental delay.

CCI Puppies



CCI breeds Labrador Retrievers, Golden Retrievers, and crosses of the two. Puppies are born in the homes of volunteer breeder caretakers that provide permanent homes to CCI's breeder dogs, and nurture newborn pups until they are about eight weeks of age. The pups are then placed with volunteer puppy raisers for 13-18 months, where they receive lots of love and attention, learn basic obedience skills, and have plenty of opportunities to socialize in a variety of environments.

CCI Training

As healthy, happy, confident young dogs, they are ready for their next step – training at one of five regional centers. CCI dogs complete a six to nine month training program where they learn from professional instructors to respond to more than 50 commands, including retrieving items, pulling wheelchairs, turning light switches on and off, and opening and closing doors.

After completing the training, the dogs enter two weeks of intensive Team Training with their human partner, where students learn to work with their future Canine Companions. Team Training culminates in an emotional and inspirational graduation ceremony, signaling the beginning of a new phase of life rich with promise for the new graduate team.

For some graduates, it means returning to work, reducing medication or their dependency on healthcare attendants. Others gain confidence and security to travel, maximize their potential in the community, and serve as social ice breakers. But for all CCI graduates, the unconditional love and unique relationship experienced through partnership with their Canine Companion remains one of the greatest rewards. The special bond that forms between our graduates and their dogs is truly amazing.

CCI assistance dogs take their work seriously and are recognized for their high level of training. A certified CCI assistance dog team is readily identified by the special blue vest worn by the canine. When not on the job, a CCI assistance dog enjoys its off-duty time just as any other dog.



About Canine Companions for Independence

Canine Companions for Independence does not charge for assistance dogs or a lifetime of ongoing support; instead CCI depends on private funding through donations from individuals, corporations, foundations and community organizations. CCI's professional staff is supported by a national network of thousands of volunteers and donors, all committed to enhancing the quality of life for people with disabilities. Canine Companions empower graduates to overcome physical, psychological and social barriers, enabling them to lead more independent and satisfying lives.

Canine Companions for Independence is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, and founding member of Assistance Dogs International (ADI), a coalition of organizations that train and place assistance dogs worldwide.

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